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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

During the period under review, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean implemented various projects in accordance with the programme of work drawn up in 2000 in consultation with Member States in the region. These include activities dealing with both subregional and regional issues, training and dissemination of information and, in particular, activities related to promoting existing firearms- and landmines-related agreements, involving the diplomatic community, members of parliament, law enforcement officers, and non-government organizations. Much attention was also devoted to organizing panels to inform parliamentarians of the need for and benefits of treaty ratification. All these projects have been carried out in cooperation and/or coordination with individual countries and regional agencies.

Considerable effort was devoted by the Centre to support for regional initiatives in the area of firearms, in particular for a regional meeting to reach a common position for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, to be held at Headquarters from 9 to 20 July 2001.

A number of new activities were initiated by the Centre during the period under review, for example, in the area of anti-personnel landmines and on projects involving civil-military relations and disarmament and development, in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service, the Organization of American States and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

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Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, the Centre sought to establish contacts with the United Nations Development Programme and regional organizations, as well as with Member States within and outside the region, with a view to exploring possible areas for cooperation and securing funding. Despite relative success achieved in fund-raising, the full functioning of the Centre is still hampered by the lack of sufficient resources for operational and administrative costs. It is hoped that with the strong support of Member States, foundations and other donors the viability of the Centre will be ensured in the coming year.

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I. Introduction

1. On 20 November 2000, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 55/34 E entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean". In paragraphs 6 and 7 of that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide the Centre with all necessary support, within existing resources, to enable it to carry out its programme of activities and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request. It is also submitted pursuant to Assembly resolution 55/34 F of 20 November 2000 entitled "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament", in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support, within existing resources, to the regional centres in carrying out their programmes of activities. The report covers the period from August 2000 to June 2001.

II. Functioning and mandate

3. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, located in Lima, was established in 1987, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/60 J of 3 December 1986. The Centre functions under the auspices of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support for the initiatives and other activities of the Member States of the region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament and for the promotion of economic and social development. The Centre functioned until the end of June 1996, when its operations were suspended due to insufficient voluntary contributions to finance its activities and administrative costs. Following the appointment of the Director of the Centre by the Secretary-General in December 1998, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/220, vigorous efforts have been launched to raise funds with a view to revitalizing the activities of the Centre.

4. In pursuit of its mandate, the Centre continued to serve the countries in the region as: (a) a means of promoting subregional, regional and cross-regional activities; (b) a tool to identify synergies between security and development issues; and (c) an instrument for the United Nations in playing a proactive role in the establishment of a more secure environment for social and economic development in the region.

III. Activities

5. The Centre continued to maintain cooperation and coordination with other United Nations agencies and entities. Most of the activities carried out during the period under review can be generally grouped under six main areas: firearms, ammunition and explosives; anti-personnel landmines; nuclear issues; disarmament and development; civil-military relations; and information and public events.

A. Firearms, ammunition and explosives

6. The Centre supported the Brazilian Government in organizing the Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean States for the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, held from 22 to 24 November 2000 in Brasilia. Representatives of Latin American and Caribbean States met to seek a common approach to the issue of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, with a view to contributing a regional perspective to the 2001 United Nations Conference and to its preparatory process.

7. After three days of deliberations, Member States adopted the Brasilia Declaration, in which they expressed, inter alia, the belief that the United Nations Conference should adopt a political declaration and a global programme of action. The Brasilia Declaration also acknowledged the important role of the Centre in the promotion of United Nations activities in the field of small arms and light weapons. Chile endorsed this acknowledgement and proposed to organize jointly with the Centre a regional follow-up conference to the 2001 United Nations Conference in November 2001.

8. A number of activities were carried out under a project entitled "Regional Clearing-house on Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives", an initiative to nurture national and regional expertise in the field of practical disarmament. The project promotes such initiatives as collective and national efforts to control the legal trade in and to curb the increasing illicit flow of firearms,

ammunition and explosives in the region. An important aspect of the project is to foster the sharing of experience and lessons learned within the region and elsewhere.

9. On 26 January 2001, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Department for Disarmament Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding setting the legal framework for cooperation between the two parties. The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and the Centre are designated in the memorandum as the implementing institutions for projects on illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives. Discussions were initiated in June 2001 with both MERCOSUR and the Andean Group, for the signature of additional memoranda of understanding to facilitate the organization of training courses and other activities related to the issue of firearms in the region.

10. In cooperation with CICAD, the Centre has initiated work on the preparation and publication of a manual on how to implement the 1997 CICAD "Model regulations for the control of the international movement of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition". The manual is expected to be used as material in the training course for police and custom officials entitled "Curbing Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions and Explosives in Latin America and the Caribbean: Training Police and Custom Officer Instructors".

11. From 7 to 9 March 2001, the Centre participated in a workshop organized by the Government of the Netherlands entitled "Towards the 2001 Conference and Beyond", which addressed issues related to the relationship between Governments and non-government organizations (NGOs). The Centre made a presentation on United Nations regional initiatives on firearms, which was to set forth a platform for government and civil society. The experience gained by the Centre through its above-mentioned "Regional Clearing-house Project on Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives" was also shared with the participants.

12. At the invitation of the Government of Japan, the Centre participated in an international symposium entitled "Conflict Prevention: Multi-Actor Coordination from United Nations to Civil Society". The symposium highlighted the need for collaboration between the different actors working on the issue of conflict prevention, in particular the local authorities and communities, the United Nations and other international organizations, NGOs and donor countries. The Centre also held discussions with representatives from the Government of Japan, NGOs and other Governments on joint cooperation initiatives related to firearms, landmines and human security issues.

13. From 23 to 25 April 2001, the Centre attended the second international Inter-parliamentary Conference Between the Parliaments of Central America, Spain and Sweden on Small Arms, held in Managua. The purpose of the Conference was to facilitate a debate among the parliamentarians, NGOs and other participants on different aspects of the illicit trafficking in firearms problem. The Conference concluded with the adoption of the "Agreement of Managua".

14. In April 2001, the Centre attended a small arms and weapons of mass destruction seminar, in Buenos Aires. The seminar aimed to promote a debate among Government representatives (notably foreign ministries, the military and the intelligence community), the industry and NGOs, regional and subregional organizations on different aspects of security threats, present and future, for the region.

15. The Centre also participated in a conference organized by the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled the "OAS and the 2001 United Nations Conference: Tackling the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects". The Conference, held on 23 and 24 May 2001 in Ottawa, was attended by some 40 representatives from Governments, NGOs and international organizations in the region. Among the various issues discussed was the definition of small arms and light weapons as a humanitarian matter. The Centre took the opportunity to discuss possible ways that the United Nations could assist countries in the region in promoting ratification of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

16. On 29 May 2001, the Centre, which serves as a platform for NGOs in Latin America and the Caribbean to develop their skills on the firearms issue, organized a meeting within the framework of its project entitled "Latin America and the Caribbean NGOs capacity-building, networking and strengthening of their advocacy means", in Geneva. The objective of the meeting was to discuss areas of cooperation in more detail and to draw up a timetable for the

implementation of the project, as well as to agree on the division of labour. Acting as a coordinator for such activities, the Centre established cooperation with institutions such as Viva Rio, the Arias Foundation, the Small Arms Survey, International Alert and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation.

B. Anti-personnel landmines

17. In June 2000 in New York, the Centre chaired the first consultative meeting between the United Nations Mine Action Service, the Government of Canada and OAS in order to set up a framework for cooperation in the preparation of a joint workshop entitled "Regional Seminar on Stockpile Destruction", to take place in Buenos Aires. The Centre also participated in subsequent follow-up meetings that took place in September 2000 in Geneva and in October 2000 in New York. The Regional Seminar on Stockpile Destruction of Anti-personnel Mines in the Americas was held in Buenos Aires, from 6 to 8 November 2000. The Centre, however, could not attend the seminar for financial reasons.

18. From 11 to 15 September 2000, the Centre attended the second meeting of States parties to the Mine Ban Convention, organized in Geneva. From 13 to 15 November 2000, the Director of the Centre represented the Department for Disarmament Affairs at the first planning mission for the third meeting of States parties to the Mine Ban Convention, scheduled to take place from 18 to 21 September 2001 in Managua. The Director has been nominated by the Secretary-General to be the Executive Secretary of the third meeting.

19. From 4 to 8 December 2000, the Centre attended the inter-sessional meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention in Geneva. Participation of the Centre in the standing committees on "Victim Assistance, Socio-Economic Reintegration and Mine Awareness" and "Mine Clearance and Related Technologies" provided a useful basis for organizing the third meeting of States parties. Preliminary contacts were made by the Centre with OAS on how to develop further cooperation on landmine matters, in particular with respect to the organization of a regional event promoting international mine action standards.

20. On 28 March 2001, the Centre organized a workshop in Lima on preparations for the third meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention. This was the second workshop in 2001 within the framework of the Inca Space Workshop Series. The objective of the workshop series is to promote discussion on and awareness of different subjects concerning peace, disarmament and development in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The workshop was attended by several permanent representatives from countries in the region, military attaches, representatives of NGOs, and members of civil society.

21. The Centre also organized, in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the Government of Peru, a regional technical workshop entitled "Revision and Future Implementation of International Mine Action Standards". The workshop, which took place on 31 May and 1 June 2001 in Lima, was part of a global outreach programme on international standards with the aim of discussing and exploring the practical application of the proposed standards and guides to assist national mine action authorities to develop and, if necessary, amend their own national standards and standard operating procedures to reflect the requirements of the international mine action standards and to develop a broad consensus for them.

22. On 30 May 2001, the Centre participated as an observer in the destruction of 33,421 anti-personnel mines outside the city of Piura in northern Peru. This was the first step in the destruction of the 310,000 anti-personnel mines as a response to the Managua Challenge, which is aimed at the destruction of all landmine stockpiles before the third meeting of States parties to the Mine Ban Convention. Participating in the event were also observers from Canada, Spain, Switzerland, the United States of America, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

C. Nuclear issues

23. On 29 November and 1 December 2000, the Government of Peru and the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, in cooperation with the Centre, organized a workshop in Lima on international cooperation and national implementation/ratification procedures for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This was the

first joint event organized after the signing of a relationship agreement between the Preparatory Commission and the United Nations on 26 May 2000, and was part of a series of international and regional workshops to promote the Treaty's objectives (Vienna in 1998, Cairo and Beijing in 1999). The main purpose of the workshop was to identify how countries in the region can promote international cooperation in Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty verification-related technologies, as well as to promote understanding of national obligations arising from signing and ratifying the Treaty.

24. The Centre was also consulted on the possibility of assisting the Peruvian Government in organizing a regional meeting on the promotion of ratification of the Additional Safeguards Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). A series of brief consultation meetings have taken place both in Vienna and in Lima between the three institutions (Government of Peru, IAEA and the Centre) and a regional workshop is scheduled to take place in late November 2001 in Lima.

25. On 3 May 2001, representatives of the Centre and the Provisional Technical Secretariat were invited to attend a hearing of the Uruguayan Committee on Foreign Relations at the headquarters of the Senate of Uruguay, with the objective of highlighting the importance of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the Government of Uruguay. The hearing was also attended by representatives of the Foreign Ministry. On that occasion, the representatives from the Centre and the Provisional Technical Secretariat briefed the Committee on the current status of the Treaty's membership, some of the latest political and diplomatic developments related to the Treaty and the financial implications as well as potential benefits of its ratification for Uruguay. The hearing presented an opportunity for members of the Senate Committee to seek clarification on some national concerns related to treaty implementation, funding and other political and technical issues.

26. On 2 May and 13 June, representatives of the Centre and the Provisional Technical Secretariat provided similar briefings to representatives from the Committee on Foreign Relations of Paraguay from both the House and Senate. Representatives of the Foreign Ministry and the national focal point of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization also attended the meetings. Members of Parliament from both Uruguay and Paraguay expressed no objection to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and indicated their willingness to ratify it as soon as possible.

D. Disarmament and development

27. The Centre organized a workshop entitled "Disarmament and Development: New Challenges and Options" on 11 June 2000, in Lima. The workshop, which was inaugurated by Ambassador Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Head of the Ministers Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Peruvian Government and former Secretary-General of the United Nations, was aimed at fomenting the debate and emphasizing the increasing importance of the tight bond between disarmament and development, as well as its effects. The debate reflected a new thinking on the symbolic and practical relation between disarmament and development. It was expected that a series of other such meetings will be organized.

E. Civil-military relations

28. On 28 February 2001 the Centre organized a workshop entitled "Civil-Military Relations in Latin America and the Caribbean Region" within the framework of the Inca Space Workshop Series. The workshop addressed issues such as the importance of having a democratic society with a stable socio-economic foundation and democratic society's influence on armed forces. The situation in Peru regarding civil-military relations was discussed as an example of the need to address this issue in the region. Participants also addressed the need for more explicit guiding policies from the Government and Parliament concerning the role and the task of armed forces. The need for greater participation of civil society in security-related issues was also expressed.

F. Information and public events

29. The Centre participated in a number of information and training events during the period under review. For example, from 11 to 22 September 2000 and from 4 to 15 June 2001, the Centre participated in seminars on disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration in Stockholm, organized by the Swedish National Defence College, the Lester Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (Canada) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. In November 2000, the Centre made a presentation at an ad hoc meeting of the Group of Latin American Countries in New York on the Latin America and Caribbean regional preparatory meeting for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

30. In Lima, on 17 April 2001, the Centre gave a lecture at the National Centre for Higher Studies, an institute of the Armed Forces of Peru, on the United Nations system. It was the second consecutive year that the Centre was invited to contribute to this annual event, which brought together 80 colonels from all the services of the armed forces and members of the national police of Peru, as well as some 10 other individuals from different areas of civil society. On 22 May, the Centre participated in a national radio station programme called "Separate Worlds" on the theme "Disarmament — A Global Task". The programme is run by the Peruvian Conference of Catholic Bishops and directed at young people. Participation in these activities provided an opportunity for the Centre to discuss the importance of disarmament, transparency in military affairs and related topics, thus stimulating a debate on democratic control of the armed forces, defence and security issues. It also facilitated the promotion of the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting of military expenditures as well as the Centre's work on firearms in the region.

IV. Finance and staffing

31. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/60 J, the Centre was established on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions that Member States and interested organizations might make for its support.

32. During the reporting period, voluntary contributions in the amount of US$ 114,875 have been received. In addition, a number of Governments and institutions contributed to the work of the Centre by sharing or absorbing the costs of joint events, personnel and/or material resources. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, the Netherlands, Panama, Sweden and Switzerland for their generous support, and to the Government of Peru, the host country, for its substantial contribution to and generous support of the Centre. The status of the Trust Fund for the Centre during 2000 appears in the annex to the present report.

33. An intensive fund-raising campaign was initiated by the Director of the Centre in the period under review. The purpose of this effort was threefold: to report on the utilization of funds and past activities; to learn more about the interest of donor countries in the region; and to seek new contributions. Over 40 countries, institutes and foundations were approached for financial assistance. In total, in addition to visits to most embassies in Lima, close to 25 Foreign Ministries were contacted in the course of the year.

34. At present, the Centre operates with some administrative support from the UNDP office in Lima. Besides the Director, the Centre includes two associate experts one from Belgium and one from Sweden, and three local staff members provided by the host Government. However, adequate funding for administrative and operational costs has yet to be found.

35. In spite of the intense fund-raising efforts made during the period under review, contributions to the Centre have decreased by one third when compared with the previous reporting period. The financial situation of the Centre therefore remains precarious. Aside from the contributions made by the host Government and the Government of Chile, no continual funding has been pledged. The Secretary-General, therefore, strongly supports and reiterates the appeal made by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/34 E to Member States in each region and to those that are able to do so, as well as to intergovernmental and international NGOs and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to enable it to strengthen and implement its programme of activities.

V. Conclusions and observations

36. The Centre has continued to serve as a facilitator for the implementation of regional initiatives in the period under review. The Centre has further stimulated regional security debates, provided members of parliaments with more in-depth information on security

matters and promoted the dissemination of information on security issues among diplomats, the military, NGOs and civil society. It has also intensified its contribution to the coordination of United Nations efforts towards peace and security in the region and has initiated a policy of signing memoranda of understanding with subregional and regional organizations as a means of avoiding duplication of efforts.

37. The Centre initiated a structural debate on the understanding of the relationship between civil-military relations, disarmament and development, as well as the promotion of social and economic development as referred to in its mandate. It has enhanced the role of the Organization as a regional catalyst for activities on peace and disarmament and has acted as a politically neutral platform for discussions on security and development issues. Despite the decreased level of voluntary contributions received during the period under review, the Centre has demonstrated, through its programme of activities, its own capacity as a strong focal point for peace, disarmament and development issues for Governments, non-governmental and regional organizations and the diverse sectors of civil society in the region.

38. The Secretary-General counts on the continued support and cooperation of Member States to ensure the Centre's effective functioning as a focal point for regional security issues and the promotion of social and economic development in the region.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean during 2000

	United States dollars
I. Fund balance, 31 December 1999	132 678
II. Income, 1 January-31 December 2000	
Voluntary contributions*	123 850
Interest income	10 041
Miscellaneous income	451
Subtotal	**134 342**
III. Expenditures	
1 January-31 December 2000	205 412
Prior period adjustments	-
Subtotal	**205 412**
IV. Fund balance, 31 December 2000	61 608

Note: Information is based on the financial statement for the period 1 January to 31 December 2000. During the period from 1 January to 30 June 2001, additional contributions totalling $41,025 were received from Austria ($10,000), Panama ($1,000), Peru ($30,000) and Switzerland ($25).

* 2000: Austria ($10,000), Chile ($10,000), Mexico ($2,500), Netherlands ($19,785), Panama ($3,000), Peru ($30,000), Sweden ($20,000) and Switzerland ($28,565).